


1856

# Obstetrics: The Science and the Art - Frontismatter and Table of Contents

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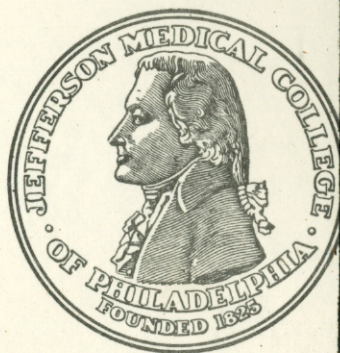
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THE  
SCIENCE AND THE ART.

BY

CHARLES D. MEIGS, M.D.,

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LONDON; MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY; OF  
THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA;  
OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, ETC. ETC.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED.

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS.



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TO THE

EMINENT WESTERN PHYSICIAN,

PHILOSOPHER,

GENTLEMAN, AND SCHOLAR,

DANIEL DRAKE, M.D.,

OF

CINCINNATI.



TO THE

WESTERN PHYSICIAN

PHYSICIAN

WESTERN AND EUROPEAN

WILLIAM DRAKE, M.D.

CHICAGO



## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I HAVE endeavored to fulfil the intention expressed in the last paragraph of the preface to the second edition of my work. I trust that my readers will find I have made some amendments in the style, and that I have brought the subject up to the latest dates of real improvements in our art and science.

CHARLES D. MEIGS,  
324 Walnut Street.

OCTOBER, 1856.



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

---

THE first edition of my work, though a large one, being exhausted, I have now the pleasure to offer to my medical brethren in America, a new one, considerably augmented as to the text, and which I have endeavored to improve by recasting some parts, by cancelling others, and by an earnest attention to improvements in the literary execution of the whole.

I shall not here specify all the changes that I have made in preparing this second edition, for the reader will be the most competent judge of them; and it is for him alone to decide, whether my labor shall prove serviceable in the object we should all lay to heart, of extending further and wider the usefulness of our calling amongst the people.

It may not be out of place, however, to say that, besides the relation of new cases, the recasting of my remarks on Cyanosis, and many fuller explanations of motives in practice, I have substituted for the former chapter on Puerperal Fever, a new chapter under the head of Childbed Fever. In that chapter, I trust, I shall be found to have made somewhat more clear and intelligible, the views that I deem most important upon the nature, seats, causes, and treatment of that disorder; and that I have, also, set forth with sufficient clearness, the motives that have long impelled me to reject the doctrine of its contagiousness. If only this part of my work should be favorably received by my brethren, I shall ever consider that I have, in it, done an acceptable service.

Lastly, I feel most grateful for the kind reception heretofore given, in this country, to my contributions to medical literature, and most thankfully acknowledge my obligation to improve them as opportunity arises; but this sentiment is blended with regrets, that, amidst the agitations, the distractions, and the fatigue of a physician's life, less time is allowed me for revision than is demanded by the many demerits of all that I have hitherto written.

CHARLES D. MEIGS,  
324 Walnut Street.

APRIL 3, 1852.



## A LETTER.

MY DEAR SIR:

Having taken the liberty to inscribe this work with your name, which I never pronounce without a feeling of affectionate respect, I desire to say a few words to you in explanation of my views and wishes in regard to the volume.

You may haply be aware that I caused to be printed, some years since, a small volume, entitled the "Philadelphia Practice of Midwifery:" a second edition in octavo form, and somewhat enlarged and amended, has now been for a considerable time exhausted; and although I have had proposals to publish a third edition of the Treatise, it has not been convenient for me to undertake the labor until the early part of the past summer.

Upon completing my arrangements with the Publishers, and commencing the task, I was induced to recast and rewrite a great part of the work; in which I did not wholly reject the fruits of my studies in earlier years. This Treatise is, however, so different from the former, that I conclude I have a just right to present it to you as a new one; and accordingly have adopted a new title, as you will have seen.

I have addressed it to the Student, and it is to him that I speak in every page. This I have done because I was not to presume to instruct those who know as well, or perhaps better than I, every point of duty appertaining to the vocation of the accoucheur, both as to the Science and the Art. I was well aware that there are many of my brethren in this country who publicly relate their experience, and explain the rationale of all the Art and Science of Obstetrics to large classes in our numerous medical schools; and I had no pretensions to know more upon these subjects than they, nor to instruct them. Induced by these views, I have been, perhaps, too elementary in some parts of the work, and addressed the Student only; but I hope it will be found that the explanations I have given may serve to remove difficulties



from the track of the Medical Student, while they may perhaps lend facilities to the progress of the young and not much experienced practitioner. I thought that young accoucheurs, who, in the distant and thinly settled parts of the country, might require a consultation where time and opportunity would not allow of it, could find herein some needful counsel and explanation, and that it would be for me a great happiness to be useful in such emergencies. Hence I have entered into many particulars, and even trivials, that are not commonly set down in the books.

As to the scientific part of the work, I may say that I hope it will be useful to the Student. If I have succeeded in exhibiting just views in that department, my labor cannot be without fruit; since it is only by such means that the vocation of the Surgeon-accoucheur can become an elevated one. It is the Science of the practitioner that raises him immeasurably above the most dextrous midwives of the land, dexterity which indeed does not prevent their ignorance from rendering them unsafe depositories of such important interests as those that concern the conservation of our wives and daughters, and their little children. An accoucheur who is merely dextrous, and who is not acquainted with the scientific parts of his profession, may be in a manner superior to the midwife, but in some regards he is inferior; since to his employment, his sex is an objection, which ought to be waived only in consideration of his Scholarship.

I have in all this treatise endeavored, upon suitable occasions, to inculcate good motives.—Good and pure motives are very essential to the honorable estimation of this department of Medicine and Surgery.—I believe that the sentiments of good Monsieur Viardel, on these points, are quite just, and I shall take leave to cite the following fragments from his book at page 261. M. Viardel, who was in full practice at Paris about 1670, in speaking of the Accoucheur, says:—

“Il doit être propre dans ses habits, mais toutes fois vêtu modeste-ment, et non en fanfaron; \* \* \* \* \* il doit, de plus, être doux dans ses paroles, et agréable dans sa conversation; \* \* \* \* \* mais surtout, il doit être prudent et discret: prudent à dresser son pronostic, et à prévoir ce qui doit arriver, de peur de n’encourir le blâme des assistans. Il doit être discret, et ne point révéler le secret qu’on lui aura confié. \* \* \* \* En un mot, il doit être patient pour ne pas se rébuter, humain et charitable, surtout envers les pauvres, et n’agir pas dans son travail pour le lucre et son intérêt propre, mais comme dit l’Apôtre, pour l’honneur et la gloire de Dieu et pour conserver sa réputation parmi le monde.”

Like all books, mine has some iterations; but I thought that to make my pages useful, it was inevitable to repeat statements; without which, I could not inscribe the why and the how on the same pages. If this is fit to be a book of consultation, it will be more useful for this fault. Hippocrates says that art is long; still, I think that, to repeat, is really to abbreviate; for the *η δε τεχνη μακρη*, and the *η δε κρισις χαλεπη*, both vanish under a clear and comprehensible delineation of the Why and the How for every special occasion.

I think you will find that I have in this book given a very clear relation of the new doctrines of menstruation, and that I have shown the Student the whole history and progress of the discovery of the mammiferous ovulum, from the time of the detection of the germinal vesicle by the Breslau professor, down to the last, most complete and admirable exposition of the whole subject by M. Coste, of the College of France. If this part of my publication is full and clear, I cannot doubt of its being advantageous. If I have done but this, and no more, I shall look confidently for useful results to my labor. For I know that multitudes of the younger class of my medical brethren, and especially of those that still belong to the Student-class, were formerly grossly neglected as to their instruction in these particulars. No one should be sent forth with a diploma certifying his acquaintance with all the branches of Medicine, whose therapeutical course, while uninformed on the questions referred to, could not but be a mere succession of conjectures and blunders rather than the sure steps of a learned and accurate reasoner.

Apologetically, I pray the reader may know that the labor of this writing and publishing, added to my professional vocations, has been so severe as seriously to affect my health—to that degree, indeed, that I have been compelled to finish it by the assistance of an amanuensis, who has written at my dictation, and read the proof-sheets. I have not dared to examine the proofs of the last 250 pages, on account of a distressing neuralgia of the eyes, which has also prevented me from reading any book or considerable pamphlet since the autumn.

It may be that I ought to solicit from my American brethren, a favorable acceptance of this work, the fruit of many years of painful toil in the acquisition of clinical experience and knowledge. I abstain from doing so, not because I desire not such acceptance, but only upon the certain conviction I have, that the book is no longer mine—and that, in going forth from my hands, it hath found many owners, each of whom will and ought to treat it as may seem good in his own sight.



As for you, my dear friend, I invoke your favorable construction of my design and action in publishing this treatise; and I pray you to believe that I am, with the greatest sincerity, your most obedient and most faithful servant, and attached friend,

CHARLES D. MEIGS.

PHILADELPHIA, *Feb.* 1849.

TO DR. DRAKE,

PROF. OF THE PRACT. OF MED., *Univ. of Louisville, Ken.*



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